

# ILLINOIS FORESTWATCH

*A component of the Critical Trends Assessment Program*

## ForestWatch



## Program Overview

Illinois ForestWatch was established in 1996 as the forest monitoring component of the Illinois EcoWatch Network, a volunteer monitoring initiative coordinated through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). As Citizen Scientists, ForestWatch volunteers conduct biological

monitoring of the state's forests in order to identify long term changes in the health of forest ecosystems. Illinois ForestWatch provides volunteers with an opportunity to learn first-hand about forest ecology and the condition of Illinois' forests, while helping scientists monitor the health of forests statewide.

As a partnership among volunteers, state scientists and policy planners, Illinois ForestWatch allows Citizen Scientists to play a direct role in the collection of valid scientific data, an opportunity which is seldom available to non-professionals. This exposure to "real science" will help foster an interest in the environmental health of the state's forests. In the process, the work of adult volunteers, high school science teachers and students becomes an educational experience as well as an enjoyable out-door exercise.

Training for ForestWatch Citizen Scientists is divided into two modules. Training for each module takes approximately 4-5 hours to complete (8-10 hours for both). Module 1 training must be completed first, while Module 2 is optional. Once trained, Citizen Scientist groups are provided a list of alternative monitoring sites, from which each group selects a permanent monitoring site based on such factors as landowner permission, proximity, and accessibility. Training is provided by a staff of certified trainers, referred to as EcoWatch Educators.

Citizen Scientists monitor their site by collecting data on tree composition and size, the presence or absence of several "indicator" plants and animals which indicate the health of a forest, and other information. A ForestWatch monitoring site is roughly the size of two football fields placed side-by-side.

Monitoring takes from 4-8 hours, depending on whether volunteers choose to complete some of the Module 2 protocols. Monitoring is repeated each spring or summer at the same location. The equipment required for ForestWatch monitoring is generally inexpensive (\$50-\$75). Data collected by certified Citizen Scientists are submitted to a statewide database that

period for Illinois ForestWatch.

A limited number of openings are available for ForestWatch training in 1997. For more information about training, contact your nearest EcoWatch Network regional office (see back). Interested citizens will be notified of training opportunities, or if training sessions are filled, their names will be placed on a prioritized waiting list until

Total forest area is now increasing statewide. However, habitat loss, fragmentation and the invasion of exotic species have reduced the ability of Illinois forests to maintain biological diversity.

—The Changing Illinois Environment: Critical Trends

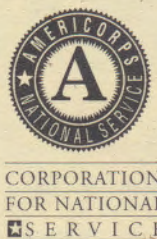
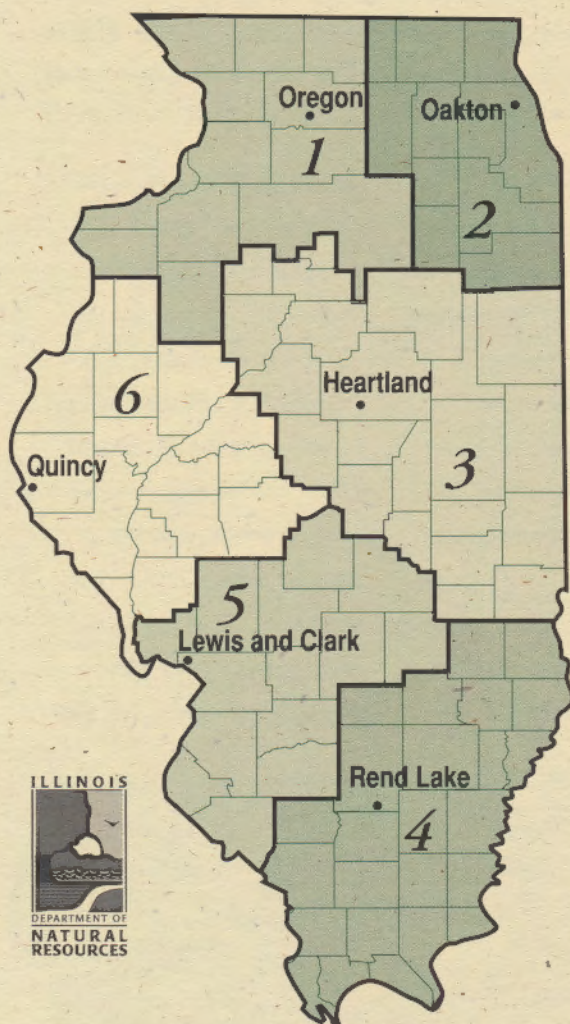
will be used by the scientific community to gauge long-term trends in the environment. The period of April 15 to September 15 is designated as the statewide annual monitoring

more training sessions can be scheduled. EcoWatch Educators are also available for informational presentations on the Illinois EcoWatch Network.



# Help keep an eye on the environment— join Illinois ForestWatch today!

Additional information on this and other Illinois EcoWatch Network programs can be obtained by contacting one of the following EcoWatch Network Regional Offices:



## Region 1

**Illinois Department of  
Natural Resources  
(ORE)**  
200 W. Washington St.  
Oregon, IL 61061  
Tel (815) 732-4026  
Fax (815) 732-4252

## Region 2

**Oakton Community  
College (OAK)**  
1600 East Golf Road  
Des Plaines, IL 60016  
Tel (847) 635-6450  
Fax (847) 635-1987  
TDD: (847) 635-1779

## Region 3

**Heartland Community  
College (HCC)**  
1226 Towanda Avenue  
Bloomington, IL 61702  
Tel (309) 888-4148  
Fax (309) 827-8505  
TDD: (309) 829-3129

## Region 4

**Rend Lake College  
(RLC)**  
RR 1  
Ina, IL 62846  
Tel (618) 437-5321 x259  
Fax (618) 437-5677

## Region 5

**Lewis and Clark  
Community College  
(LCC)**  
5800 Godfrey Road  
Godfrey, IL 62035-2466  
Tel (618) 467-2328  
Fax (618) 466-1202  
TDD (800) 526-0844

## Region 6

**Quincy University (QCY)**  
1800 College Avenue  
Quincy, IL 62301-6830  
Tel (217) 228-5576  
Fax (217) 228-5568

## Statewide

TDD (217) 782-9175

## About the Illinois

# EcoWatch NETWORK

Illinois ForestWatch is a program of the Illinois EcoWatch Network, a statewide network of ecosystem-based volunteer monitoring programs coordinated by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Through programs such as RiverWatch, ForestWatch, PrairieWatch, WetlandWatch and UrbanWatch, adult volunteers and high school science teachers and students play a key role in the collection of ecological data used by scientists to monitor long-term trends in ecosystem health. In addition to widening the scope of citizen involvement in ecological research efforts, EcoWatch Network programs provide state scientists with comprehensive information to supplement professional scientific databases. The Illinois EcoWatch Network is part of the Critical Trends Assessment Program.

Contact the Illinois EcoWatch Network on-line at <http://dnr.state.il.us/inringif.htm>

The Illinois EcoWatch Network is an AmeriCorps National Service program and is part of the Critical Trends Assessment Program, an on-going process at the Department of Natural Resources to assess the extent and condition of Illinois ecosystems. This material is based on work supported by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, Illinois Commission on Community Service, and the Corporation for National Service under AmeriCorps grant No. 94ASC10141301. For more information concerning other Illinois AmeriCorps programs, contact the Illinois Commission on Community Service at 1-800-592-9896.

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